#### **RUDOLF HEBERLE PAPERS**

Mss. 1921, 2254, 2345 Inventory

> Compiled by Ingeborg Wald 2004

Revised by Bradley J. Wiles 2009

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library Louisiana State University Libraries Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

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#### **SUMMARY**

**Size** 9.5 linear ft.

Geographic Locations Germany, Louisiana, Mississippi

**Inclusive Dates** 1918-1991

**Bulk Dates** 1936-1980

**Languages** English, German, French

**Summary** Professional and personal papers of Rudolf Heberle,

Louisiana State University professor of sociology and researcher. Includes correspondence, notes, printed material, clippings, writings, and research files relating to his professional activities and his interest in the political situation in his native Germany, both from a professional and personal perspective. Personal correspondence and photographs relate to family and community involvement.

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**Related Collections** Franziska Heberle Letters, Mss. 3624

Rudolf Heberle Oral History Interview, Mss. 4700.0026

**Citation** Rudolf Heberle Papers, Mss. 1921, 2254, 2345, Louisiana

and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries,

Baton Rouge, La.

**Stack Locations** 78:93-98, OS:H, Vault:1

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

Rudolf Heberle was born July 3, 1896, the only child of Carl-Otto Heberle and his wife Ellen Mathilde. He spent his childhood in Lübeck. Illness prevented him from volunteering for military service at the outset of World War I. However, he took courses in caring for soldiers injured during battle and completed the advanced high school graduation on February 22, 1915, from the prestigious Gymnasium Katharineum. Heberle was drafted in 1917 and stationed in Belgium, where he spent his time with older soldiers who were mostly urban workers from Hamburg. During this time his political interests were awakened.

After the war from 1918 to 1920, Heberle studied law at several universities. In 1920 he took advantage of special courses offered in Kiel. One such course was basic sociology taught by Ferdinand Tönnies, whose daughter, Franziska, he would marry in 1924. For his doctoral thesis, he worked with Bernhard Harms, studying the workers' movement in Sweden. After obtaining his doctorate, Heberle secured a position in Königsberg. The experience Heberle gained and research methodologies he developed proved useful in later phases of his academic career. Later when he worked in the United States studying displaced persons in Louisiana and Mississippi, he used questionnaires and methods similar to the ones he had developed during his previous work in the Baltic region.

While in Kiel, Heberle established several long-term friendships and professional relationships. His classmate Alfred Meusel, who later became a high official in education in the East German government, attended seminars with Heberle and became a lifelong correspondent. In 1926, Heberle received a two-and-a-half year fellowship from the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Foundation. This involved an initial stay in England, where all fellows gathered and attended lectures and seminars. During his stay in London, Heberle became acquainted with many of the leading European and American scholars of the time. One of these was Harold Laski, the prolific socialist reform writer and member of the Fabian Society.

In December of 1926, Heberle arrived in New York City. While in the United States, Heberle decided to focus his efforts on the topic of social mobility. His interests were inspired by Pitirim Sorokin's work and he soon received support from Robert Ezra Park at the University of Chicago. Heberle traveled around the United States spending time in Chicago, New Orleans, and Mound Bayou, Mississippi, where he met the town founder, Isaiah Montgomery. On the way to California, he stopped in Santa Fe and visited pueblos, and on the way back to New York, he visited the Mesabi Range, an open-pit mining camp between Grand Rapids and Babbit, Minnesota.

Heberle returned to the east coast where he met with his family and they settled in Washington, D.C. In D.C. he made contact with several prominent residents including, Ewan Clague, who later held an important position at the Social Security Administration; Mordecai Hesekiel, who became a Commissioner of Labor Statistics; Max Lerner, who was an educator, author (*America as a Civilization*), and syndicated columnist; and Evelyn and Arthur Burns, who were influential in the Social Security Administration.

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In 1929, Heberle completed his research project and moved his family back to Kiel. He published Über die Mobilität der Bevölkerung in den Vereinigten Staaten, which formed his *Habilitation* work at Kiel University. Heberle focused on an area of sociology called Soziographie, a term initiated by his former instructor Tönnies. His inaugural lecture at Kiel was titled Anpassung von Einwanderern in den Vereinigten Staaten (Assimilation of Immigrants in the United States), which was published in 1930.

At Kiel University, one of Heberle's most popular lectures concerned political parties in Germany. His research was conducted primarily in Schleswig-Holstein with support from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Deutsche Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft. However, when he delivered the manuscript to publishers in Germany, no one was willing to publish it. Increasingly the political climate did not allow him to continue effectively at the university. The Nazi government was opposed to his research and after being denounced by a student who attended his class Heberle encountered serious difficulties.

By 1933, Heberle's academic life had grown more insecure. While he was attending a meeting of the Social Science Research Council Committee on Migration Differentials in New Haven, Connecticut, his salary at Kiel was stopped. Thereafter, he was informed that he would not be promoted to full professor and it was made clear that there would be no position in his specialty at his university. He and his family decided to emigrate to the United States. Dorothy Swaine Thomas, an American sociologist, was especially helpful to them at this stage.

The Heberle family arrived in Baltimore in the summer of 1938, and that year on July 4th they moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Heberle joined the Louisiana State University (LSU) faculty as a professor of sociology. At LSU, Heberle had a light teaching load with half of his salary coming from the Rockefeller Foundation. In his early years at the university, he directed three projects that required empirical field work. These included: a study of new settlers in the Yazoo-Mississippi-Backwater area following the great flood of 1927; a study of part-time farming by oil refinery workers in East Baton Rouge Parish; and a study of displaced persons in Louisiana and Mississippi from the Baltic region of Europe.

When the U.S. entered World War II, Heberle and his family suddenly found themselves classified as alien enemies. Not knowing how long the war would last, Heberle obtained character statements and affidavits documenting his anti-fascist background. As a result, he was able to teach through the war years and continue his academic pursuits. In 1944, Heberle and his family became naturalized U.S. citizens.

After the war, Heberle had opportunities to return to academic positions in Germany but chose to remain in the United States. In 1955 he was awarded a Boyd Professorship at LSU. He retired in 1963 but continued to teach seminars at his house and served as vice president of the American Sociological Society from 1966-1967. Over the years Heberle

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continued his research work and publications, gaining national and international recognition and accepting two honorary degrees from German universities.

Heberle's wife, Franziska, was active in various social and political causes in Baton Rouge. She was employed as a social worker in the Louisiana State Public Welfare Administration, served on the board of the Baton Rouge Civic Symphony, and helped found the local chapter of the League of Women Voters. The Heberles had three children, Antje, Hinrich, and Juergen.

Rudolf Heberle died in 1991 at the age of ninety-four in Baton Rouge General Medical Center.

#### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Rudolf Heberle Papers include correspondence, notes, subject files, and other project records relating to Heberle's teaching, writing, research, and community interests, as well as his interest in the political situation in his native Germany, both from a professional and personal perpsective.

The collection is divided into two subgroups, Personal Papers and Professional Papers, both of which are further arranged into series and subseries. The Personal Papers subgroup consists of correspondence and subject files. The correspondence is primarily written or typed letters to and from Heberle's friends, family, and associates in Germany. These records highlight his concern over the rise of fascism in Europe, and include correspondence to and from Alfred Muesel, Carola Tőnnies, and Hans Gerth. The subject files contain various formats and types of records, which offer biographical information on Heberle and help document his personal, community, and academic interests as they developed over time. These include early journalistic writing from Heberle in Germany, information on Mildred Harnack and the Red Orchestra, and subject files on Heberle's mentor, Ferdinand Tőnnies. The photographs in the personal papers subgroup include several undated pictures of Heberle's family, friends, and associates both from Germany and the United States. Negatives of these images are housed separately.

The Professional Papers subgroup consists of correspondence, notes, research files, and other records documenting Heberle's career as a professor at LSU and as an internationally renowned scholar in the field of sociology. The correspondence is arranged chronologically or alphabetically by correspondent, and includes written communication between Heberle and other notable sociologists, including Everett Hughes and René Kőnig. The notes series includes early lecture and presentation notes written in German, several reference card groupings that cover various sub-areas of sociology, and newspaper clippings from around the time of the start of World War II. The projects series reflects his emphasis on population studies, labor supply, displaced persons, and social movements. Included are drafts and revisions of Heberle's book Social Movements, along with more lecture and presentation materials and research files. The bulk of the research files relate to his studies of displaced persons in Mississippi and Louisiana (1951), undertaken with LSU Ph.D. student Dudley S. Hall, and social and economic conditions in the Yazoo-Mississippi Backwater Area (1941), undertaken for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Photographs include images of everyday life and work for immigrants and the impoverished in rural and backwater Mississippi.

The remainder of the Professional Papers subgroup includes a variety of records documenting Heberle's involvement in national and international professional organizations and his tenure as a professor at LSU. The LSU and teaching series contain records on grant applications, administrative matters, and the materials Heberle used in formulating and teaching courses at the university and elsewhere. Several files in the teaching series illustrate Heberle's involvement with agencies such as UNESCO and the U.S. War Department.

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The primary strength of the collection is comprehensive documentation of Heberle's scholarly activities at LSU and abroad. Particularly complete are his notes and other preparatory records for course lectures and presentations, his research files for projects on displaced persons in Louisiana and Mississippi, the portion detailing the writing and editorial process for his book *Social Movements*, and other material relating to his study of population migration. The primary weakness of the collection is that several records and files are undated or insufficiently labeled, thus obscuring some of the context of their creation and use. The photographs are interfiled in sections of the collection that correspond to the content of the manuscripts series and subseries.

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